

HONORING NEIL KOSKI

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Neil Koski, who was awarded the 2006 Congressional Volunteer Recognition Award by the Second Congressional District of Maryland's Veterans Advisory Group.

Mr. Koski is a dedicated volunteer at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fort Howard Community Based Outpatient Clinic. He provides morning coffee to the out patients at the clinic five days a week. He helps complete the mission at Fort Howard by providing a supplemental service to the veterans which could not have otherwise be provided through normal operations at the clinic.

Relying upon his experience as a veteran, he provides companionship and camaraderie that few can supply to the veterans attending the clinic. Mr. Koski is a Disabled American Veteran who, because of his experiences overcoming his physical disability, is able to provide unique encouragement and friendship to the veteran patients at the Fort Howard clinic. His ability to share stories and tales of his accomplishments is legendary.

Mr. Koski is also a member of the National Honor Guard for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He serves as the VAVS Representative for the Veterans of Foreign Wars at the Department of Veteran Affairs Baltimore Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center. Mr. Koski ensures that members are volunteering to provide services to patients as well as making monetary and in-kind donations to support patient needs at the Center. The pride that Mr. Koski feels representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars is constantly evident in his work as a volunteer.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor Mr. Neil Koski. He is a remarkable volunteer for Maryland's veterans. Through his tireless efforts in 34 years and 9,000 hours of volunteering, he has helped improve the lives of hundreds of veterans as they receive their medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. He has gone above and beyond the call of duty to aid those who have dedicated their lives to serve our great country.

 TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF BLACK
HISTORY MONTH
HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, as Black History Month again draws to a close, it is the perfect time to reflect on the accomplishments of so many black figures who were intimately connected to the Mountain State.

To fully appreciate the breadth and depth of the contributions of these heroes, we need only to imagine what life in the Mountain State—what life across America—would be like without them.

We might not even be celebrating this special month, for example, were it not for the ef-

forts of Carter G. Woodson, referred to by many as the "father of black history," a son of slaves who came to Huntington, West Virginia, and worked in our coal mines until he could afford enough money for an education. Once firmly established in a successful academic career which included West Virginia State College and Howard University in Washington, D.C., Carter used this education to bring to life the story of black Americans missing from many of our history books. In 1926, he gained helped establish "Negro History Week," and in 1976 Woodson's week was expanded into the Black History Month we celebrate today.

And where would America be without the contributions of Booker T. Washington, undoubtedly West Virginia's most famous African American? Poverty stricken but free at last, young Washington and his family made a perilous journey on foot through deep forests and across the New River Gorge, from Franklin County, Virginia to Kanawha County, West Virginia. Alongside his father, Booker T. Washington went to work in the salt furnaces at Malden when he was only nine and later in a coal mine along Campbell's Creek. Naturally intelligent and starved for an education, Washington left Malden at 16 and walked the 200 miles to Hampton Institute in Virginia. Upon graduation, he returned to Malden to teach school for both black children and adults.

Like Carter G. Woodson, Booker T. Washington rose to national prominence. He established the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which still educates many today, and he helped set up the National Negro Business League. Washington wrote twelve books, the most famous of which, *Up From Slavery*, recounted his early life in Malden, still read widely in our schools today.

Other West Virginia sons and daughters, too, have made lasting contributions that have changed the landscape of our land and our intellect:

J.R. Clifford, born in Grant County, fought in the Civil War and then came back home to fight for civil rights. A lawyer and a journalist, he brought the first legal challenge of the state's segregated school system to court, and worked with his friend W.E.B. DuBois to found the Niagara Movement of 1905.

Christopher Harrison Payne, born a slave in Monroe County, broke ground in black journalism, establishing three newspapers, *The West Virginia Enterprise*, *The Pioneer* and *The Mountain Eagle*. In 1896 he was elected to the state legislature as a Republican delegate from Fayette County, the first black to serve in the West Virginia legislature.

Minnie Buckingham Harper of Keystone, the first African American woman to become a member of a legislative body in the United States, broke ground for countless women in 1928 when she was appointed to fill the term of her late husband.

Leon Sullivan, born in Charleston, was brought up in a dirty alley in one of the city's most impoverished sections, worked in a steel mill to pay his tuition at West Virginia State College, and rose from poverty to found the Opportunity Industrialization Center, a job-training organization with branches around the world.

Helen Dobson of Raleigh County, well-known throughout West Virginia for her beautiful voice, performed at the inauguration of two of West Virginia's governors and served as public school teacher for many years. Her

spirit is still strong in southern West Virginia and it was with Ms. Dobson in mind that I signed on as a co-sponsor of a bill that designates the African American spiritual as a national treasure. This bill passed the House of Representatives earlier this month.

This, of course, is just a small sampling of so many strong African Americans who have made a difference. Add to this list the countless men and women who worked long hours for less pay to provide for a better future for their children, the many men and women who fought and continue to fight for our liberties in the armed forces, the men and women who through their compassion and quiet strength, were role models by which we all can live. Also add to this list the many African Americans who continue today to work for a better West Virginia.

We are deeply indebted to our educators, folks like Bluefield State President Albert Walker; Maurice Cooley, Director of African American Programs at Marshall University; Betty Jane Cleckley, Vice President for Marshall University Multicultural Affairs; Loretta Young, Vice President for Development at Concord University; and Roslyn Clark-Artis, Chief Advancement Officer at Mountain State University. These men and women, and so many others, like Thomas Evans, Raleigh County educator and principal of Stratton High School and Rev. William Law, founder of the Beckley World Mission, whom both passed away recently, have raised the torch that Carter T. Woodson lit so many years ago.

Too often, the history of black Americans is not fully taught or remembered. Let this annual return of black history month spur us all to celebrate African-American contributions to the greatness of West Virginia and to commend those carrying on this proud tradition of service today.

 HONORING THE HUNTINGTON
JEWISH CENTER
HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Huntington Jewish Center.

In 1907, some of Long Island's first Jewish families arrived in the Huntington area bringing with them a rich spirit and culture. Their desire to set down roots and to belong to a community has led to the creation of one of the nation's most enduring religious establishments. These Jewish families gathered to pray, learn and socialize in the old firehouse on Main Street and the Huntington Jewish Center was born.

The current building, located on Park Avenue was completed in 1961. It was designed to meet the diverse needs of the membership. The elegantly modern building houses two sanctuaries, a Hebrew school and nursery school, a family life center, youth wing, social hall, library, meeting rooms and an office.

One hundred years later it is celebrating its centennial anniversary. The devotion and dedication of its generations of members has translated into 100 years of worship in the Huntington community. The Huntington Jewish Center is now the oldest synagogue in Suffolk